

That Which is Claimed

1. An automated order processing system permitting customers who have already provided customer information to the system to order selected products from a vast array of products offered by multiple participating merchants, said system comprising:

a product/merchant database including information corresponding to an order number assigned to each product offered through the system by multiple participating merchants;

10 a customer database including a customer information set for each system customer, said information set including customer identification information, customer address information and method of payment information;

15 a customer interface for receiving incoming product orders from customers who have connected to the system via a system address and for identifying each customer placing an order;

20 means employing information from the customer database for matching each incoming customer order to the customer information set for that customer;

means employing information from the product/merchant database for matching each incoming customer order to a participating merchant; and

means for communicating processed orders to the participating merchant that provides the ordered product;

wherein the participating merchants include airlines or other entities providing security services at public transportation sites or other public venues and the product offered comprises check-in security clearance for customers.

2. A method permitting customers to use an order processing system to order selected products from a vast array of products offered by multiple participating merchants, said method comprising:

5 establishing accounts between an order processing system and multiple participating merchants who have agreed to offer their respective products for sale;

assigning an order number to each product offered by the participating merchants;

10 establishing a customer database including a customer information set for each customer, said information set including customer identification, customer address information and method of payment information;

15 each customer, when desiring to place a product order, utilizing a system address to establish contact with the system and entering the order number for the product desired;

identifying each customer placing an order and employing information from the customer database to match each incoming customer order to the customer information set for that 20 customer; and

communicating processed orders to the participating merchant that provides the ordered product;

wherein the participating merchants include airlines or other entities providing security services at public

transportation sites or other public venues and the product offered comprises check-in security clearance for customers.

3. A method permitting customers to use an order processing system to automatically provide customer identification information to security personnel at public transportation sites or other public venues where customers desire entry, said method comprising:

establishing accounts between an order processing system and security operations at public transportation sites and other public venues;

assigning an order number by which a customer's desire to gain entry to public transportation site or other public venue may be communicated to the system;

establishing a customer database including a customer information set for each customer, said information set including customer identification information;

each customer, when desiring entry at a public transportation site or public venue that requires identity verification, utilizing a system address to establish contact with the system and entering an order number;

verifying the identity of each customer following the customer's entry of an order number and employing information from the customer database to match each incoming customer order to the customer information set for that customer; and

communicating the system's verification of the identity of the customer and selected portions of the customer

identification information in the customer database to the public transportation site or public venue for use by security personnel at that site or venue in further verifying the identity of the customer desiring entry.

5 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the customer identification information in the customer database includes digital photographs of customers.

10 5. The method of claim 3 including the step, performed by the order processing system, of monitoring activities associated with individual customers and cross referencing the activities of customers to generate a customer security rating that is communicated to the public transportation site or public venue for use by security personnel at the site or venue.

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